



John P. Kelly, Chair
Charles Kenny, First Vice Chair
David W. Behrend, Executive Director

FREIGHT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Commissioner Stephen Shaw, Chair
Commissioner Sara Sooy, Vice Chair

Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2024

I. Roll Call of Members

Freight Initiatives Committee (FIC) Chair Stephen Shaw, a Morris County Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. and nine voting members were present.

II. Salute to Flag

Commissioner Shaw led the room in a salute to the Flag.

III. Approval of Minutes

Union County made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 19 meeting, the City of Newark seconded. The minutes were approved by voice vote with one abstention from Middlesex County.

IV. Update on NJTPA Freight Division Activities

Jakub Rowinski, Central Staff, provided an update on key initiatives underway, including the 2050 Freight Industry Level Forecast. He said the NJTPA conducts this study roughly every four years to support the Long Range Transportation Plan and other activities requiring freight data. The methodological framework is finished, which outlines the step-by-step process of the study, and data has been acquired. The consultants are enhancing the previously completed e-commerce analysis with new data highlighting the exponential growth of delivery trucks, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The NJTPA Freight Forecasting Tool is also being updated. . This tool projects future commodity flows using Moody's county level industry employment forecasts. The study will be completed in June 2025.

The Fiscal Year 2025 Freight Concept Development Program is a four-part effort, that includes two concept development studies. The first, based on a recommendation from the recently completed Southern Middlesex County Freight Movement Study, is the Southern Middlesex County North-South Truck Corridor Project in Cranbury and Monroe. The second is the East Hanover Avenue Bridge Catenary Rail Clearance Project in Morris Plains and Morris Township, which originated from the Morris-Warren County Rail Corridor Study completed in 2013. The

NJTPA is also conducting a preliminary screening for Plate F vertical clearance in Perth Amboy along the NJ TRANSIT North Jersey Coast Line. Plate F is a geometric railcar standard requiring 17-foot clearance, with an additional buffer for catenary electrified areas. Finally, the consultants will also develop a list of potential projects for the next cycle and assist subregions in advancing projects that previously graduated from this program. Consultant selection is underway and the project is expected to kick-off in the coming months.

V. Presentations: Truck Electrification Initiatives

The Chair introduced the three speakers, Nicholas Raspanti, Senior Director of Sales and Port Initiatives at Zeem Solutions; Pip Decker, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Current Trucking; and Peg Hanna, Director of Climate Change Mitigation and Monitoring at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection..

Mr. Raspanti said Zeem Solutions is working to accelerate the transition to electric transportation for all types of fleet operators, with a goal of trying to get cost parity with diesel operations. He said the range and capability of electrification is appropriate for anything within 300 miles of port gateways. The port in New York-New Jersey is a good candidate for electrification because about 80 percent of cargo stays close to the port, he said. Zeem is scheduled to open a depot near Port Newark next year.

Mr. Decker said his company leases electric trucks to operators and installs charging infrastructure. He said his goal is to help every operator, planning agency, and utility service provider to get zero emission freight off the ground. Current Trucking is installing charging infrastructure at International Motor Freight's Newark facility, a project that is partly funded with federal dollars awarded to IMF through NJTPA's Transportation Clear Air Measures Program.

Ms. Hanna announced that a Clean Corridor Coalition led by New Jersey and including Connecticut, Delaware, and Maryland, is receiving a \$250 million federal grant for 24 charging sites, including nine in New Jersey. She said the goal is to create a comprehensive interstate charging corridor that would be used primarily by local trucks in the short term and eventually, as the technology expands the chargers could be used by long-haul trucks. Ms. Hanna said the entire project is expected to span about five years. Because of the need for huge amounts of power, sites with some power already or ones that can easily get power will be prioritized.

Following the presentations, panelists answered questions from committee members and attendees.

In response to a question about whether trucks can use DC fast chargers for cars, Mr. Raspanti said they can as long as it uses the same connector type. Mr. Decker said the speed of charging is an important issue. Some chargers can accommodate 180 to 360 kilowatt hours per hour, which would require about two hours of charging for a trip to Pennsylvania and back but are costly. He said slower chargers, where you park for up to 10 hours, are less expensive.

In response to a question about fuel cell electric trucks, Mr. Decker said Current Trucking does not offer this technology, but Toyota, Peterbilt, and other manufacturers have hydrogen and fuel cell initiatives.

In response to a question regarding the Buy America requirements, Mr. Decker said some batteries are being manufactured here. He said the capacity of batteries coming online will lead to lower prices. In response to another question, he said you can retrofit vehicles for electric, which is happening a lot on school buses and also in transit buses.

Ms. Hanna was asked about the charging facilities the grant would fund. She said the stations would be privately owned and operated. She said there would likely be a need for a mix of charging depots the other presenters discussed and public charging locations, like what NJDEP is planning. She said the sites would require a tremendous amount of power, which is a challenge for utility companies, who are also seeing increased demand from data centers. She said Governor Murphy's goal is for New Jersey's energy to primarily come from renewable sources, which will require more power generated from solar and wind. However, nuclear power could potentially play a role as well.

In response to a question regarding the role communities might play in site selection, Ms. Hanna encouraged them to review the site selection criteria once the RFP is released.

Before moving to committee member reports, the Chair called upon NJTPA Executive Director David Behrend who expressed his gratitude on behalf of the staff and Board to Walter Lane of Somerset County and Liza Betz of Union County who will be retiring soon. Both worked with the NJTPA for many years.

VI. Two-Minute Reports on Freight Activities from Committee Members

The Chair gave an update on Morris County's Dover and Rockaway Railroad runaround track that has been completed and funded through New Jersey's Rail Freight Assistance Program. He also reported that a contract was executed for design of the Chester Branch rail bridge over Berkshire Valley Road in Roxbury, which has a long history of truck collisions due to insufficient clearance. This project graduated from the NJTPA's Freight Concept Development Program last year. He thanked NJDOT and the NJTPA for their support.

Janice Marino-Doyle, NJDOT, updated the committee on the truck parking study. Phase one, to be completed early next year, aims to identify the locations and scope of the problem. NJDOT reviewed existing studies, interviewed long- and short-haul drivers, and received about 500 survey responses. Notably, most drivers spend over two hours looking for parking to avoid running out of service hours. NJDOT also gathered data using cameras and various analyses. Phase two will use this data to determine the best locations to address the truck parking shortage.

Stephan Pezdek, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, said operations are recovering smoothly following the port strike, though there have been delays with removing empty containers. He said the Port Authority is collaborating with NJDOT, New York DOT, and New York City on their truck parking studies.

Mr. Lane thanked the NJTPA staff for recognizing his contributions. He said he will continue to be involved through his new position with the State Office of Planning Advocacy. Last week, the county Circulation Element, funded by NJTPA, was adopted into the county Master Plan. The county received over 60 comments, with only three requiring changes, indicating strong public support for most strategies and recommendations. The plan includes various goods movement and transportation projects, advancing transportation efforts in Somerset County.

Ms. Betz thanked everyone for the recognition.

VII. Next meeting: Monday December 16, 2024 (Virtual)

VIII. Adjournment

At 2:16 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by the Port Authority, seconded by Union County and carried unanimously.

Freight Initiatives Committee

ATTENDANCE

October 21, 2024

VOTING MEMBERS	
Hon. Stephen Shaw (Chair)	Morris County
Tom Malavasi	Hudson County
Dolores Martinez-Wooden	City of Newark
Hon. Charles Kenny	Middlesex County
Walt Lane	Somerset County
Liza Betz	Union County
Dorian Smith	Governors Authorities Unit
Megan Fackler	NJDOT
Stephan Pezdek	Port Authority
OTHERS	
Bob Hornby	Hunterdon County
Katherine Fullerton	Hunterdon County
John Hayes	Morris County
Tanner Thul	Hudson County
Trevor Howard	City of Newark
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Leslie Fordjour	New York Metropolitan Transportation Council
Janice Marino-Doyle	NJDOT
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Rickie Clark	Federal Highway Administration-New Jersey
Pip Decker	Current Trucking
Peg Hanna	NJ DEP
Nick Raspanti	Zeem Solutions
Jay Shuffield	Port Authority
Scott Parker	Jacobs
Stephanie Finch	WSP